



# ICIRR

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

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## Budgeting for Results Commission Public Hearing

October 12, 2012

Commissioners,

The **Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)** is a coalition of over 130 ethnic community based organizations across the state. In addition to educating and organizing immigrants and developing integration initiatives, ICIRR administers well run, cost effective, statewide, award winning immigrant-serving programs.

The State of Illinois is home to 1.8 million immigrants, the sixth largest immigrant population of any state in the nation. According to the 2010 Census, Illinois' population is now 13.5% foreign-born. **Immigrants accounted for half of the state's total growth in the past decade, with the Latino Population increasing 32.5% and the Asian Population increasing 38.6%.**

Over the past ten years, ICIRR has worked in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to serve the immigrant community through programs funded from the **Immigrant Integration Services Line** under the Human Capital Development Division of the Department of Human Services.

Critical programs in the Immigrant Integration Services Line include the **Immigrant Family Resource Program** which provides equal access to food assistance, health care and income support for immigrant families that are unable to receive assistance from other means, as well as the **New Americans Initiative** Citizenship Program, that directly assists immigrants to become citizens and New Illinoisans to become more integrated in their communities, obtain better jobs, buy homes and give back to our state. In addition, the We Want to Learn English program has increased English as a Second Language (ESL) learning in Illinois by linking native born volunteers with immigrants as tutors – tutoring in English, Civic Education and after school programs. The **We Want to Learn English** program has grown to a State/Federal/Local partnership, working with the Federal AmeriCorps program to provide a 76% match to the 24% state funds invested. Through these programs, ICIRR has served 728,230 families through 72 organizations in 52 languages across the State last year. Furthermore, over 13,809 Illinoisans have volunteered over 124,470 hours to make these programs a success.

ICIRR administers sophisticated programs across the state that operate at multiple levels; maintaining grass-tops ethnic media campaigns, partnerships with businesses, community colleges and faith based institutions, while still reaching into local immigrant communities through grassroots outreach. Through all this, our programs remain strictly compliant with state and federal programmatic and funding regulations. This work continues today and is ever more critical with an increasing immigrant population but more challenging due to state budget cuts.

ICIRR recognizes the "Budgeting for Results" method of allocating funds, however this method of allocation was still based on funding levels that were initially distorted and did not match the needs and populations in the state.

The Immigrant Integration Services Line under the **Illinois Department of Human Services** is roughly 1/100th of one percent of the State budget and serves Illinois' immigrants which make up 13.5% of our state's population and 17.5% of our workforce. In total, Immigrant Integration Services are currently funded at \$6.9 Million for FY 2012. Over the past three years the Immigrant Integration Services line has been cut by 22% while the immigrant population has increased exponentially.

**The FY12 reductions in the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) budget have made us unable to provide services to immigrant communities most in need.** The immigrant population is growing outside of Chicago but funding levels have not reflected the size of the taxpaying population. We have been forced to choose between maintaining infrastructure for immigrants in the city or allocating funds to rapidly growing and vulnerable communities in the suburbs, central, and downstate Illinois. Many organizations in the city are rapidly losing funding while suburban and outstate organizations are struggling to meet demand.

With fewer resources, organizations will not be able to help impact the issues facing the growing immigrant community. In addition, with these continued budget cuts, the infrastructure of immigrant serving organizations that has taken decades to build up will continue collapsing across the state and no longer exist. We have the data to show that the immigrant services line in Illinois is being used effectively and efficiently to create change amongst immigrant families and communities. On behalf of ICIRR and the 72 community organizations offering these programs, I would like to thank the Budgeting for Results Commission for continuing to support our very needed and critical work.

Sincerely,

Jennifer M Kons,  
Immigrant Family Resource Program Director





## **Immigrant Family Resource Program and New Americans Initiative Offices**

Alliance for Filipino Immigrant Rights and Empowerment  
Americans By Value  
Arab American Action Network  
Arab American Family Services  
Cambodian Association of Illinois  
Casa Guanajuato - Moline  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago  
Centro de Información - Elgin  
Centro Romero  
Centro Sin Fronteras  
Chinese American Service League  
Chinese Mutual Aid Association  
Community Health Partnership of IL – Aurora, Hoopeston, Kankakee, Woodstock  
Community Wellness Program at St. Anthony Hospital  
East Central IL Refugee Mutual Assistance Center  
Erie Neighborhood House  
Family Focus Aurora  
Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois  
Fr. Gary Graf Center  
Hamdard Center for Health and Human Services  
Hanul Family Alliance  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society  
Hispanic American Community Education and Services  
Immigration Project

Indo-American Center - Bloomington  
Instituto del Progreso Latino  
Interfaith Leadership Project  
Korean American Community Services  
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center  
La Voz Latina – Rockford  
Lao American Community Services  
Latino Organization of the Southwest  
Logan Square Neighborhood Association  
Mano a Mano Family Resource Center – Round Lake Park  
Mujeres Latinas en Accion  
Muslim Women Resource Center  
Northwest Neighborhood Federation  
Omni Youth Services - Mt. Prospect  
Polish American Association  
Puentes de Esperanza – East St. Louis  
Refugee One  
Rock Valley College  
South-East Asia Center  
Southwest Organizing Project  
Community Education Township HS District 214  
United African Organization  
West Suburban Action Project  
World Relief Moline  
World Relief Aurora and Wheaton  
World Relief Chicago  
Youth Service Bureau of Illinois Valley  
YWCA of Sauk Valley – Sterling